

REMARKS

Claims 12-17 are pending. Claims 12 and 15 are independent. By this Amendment, claims 1-11 are canceled and claims 12-17 are added. Support for these newly added claims can be found, at least, at paragraphs [0034]-[0039] Applicants' specification. It is believed that no new matter is added.

In view of the foregoing amendment and the following remarks, reconsideration and allowance of this application are respectfully requested.

I. 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) Rejection

Claims 1-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Heitkamp et al. ("Heitkamp") in view of Jeffries. Claims 1-11 are canceled. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection of claims 1-11 is moot under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

II. New Claims

By this Amendment, new claims 12-17 are presented. Applicants respectfully submit that the new claims distinguish over the applied references.

Claim 12, for example, recites a combination of elements including "when a new device is connected to the network, the managing device determines whether or not the new device is to be a new managing device, and if the new device is determined to be the new managing device, the managing device transmits the managed state information to the new device." Claim 15 recites similar features in a varying scope. Neither Heitkamp nor Jeffries disclose or suggest these features.

Heitkamp discloses a network device including multiple buses, master devices, and slave devices. Heitkamp discloses that only one of the master devices is an active master that controls one or more of the slave devices and the other master devices are standbys. See Abstract, col. 3, line 63-col. 4, line 4 of Heitkamp. However, Heitkamp does not disclose that when a new device is connected to the network, the system decides the new device to be the next new master device. Rather, Heitkamp merely discloses that there exists the active master device among master devices. Further, Jeffries does not supply the subject matter lacking in Heitkamp.

Accordingly, the applied references fail to disclose and would not have rendered obvious these claimed features of claims 12 and 15. Therefore, prompt examination and allowance of new claims 12 and 15, and claims 13, 14, 16, and 17 depending therefrom, are respectfully requested.

Conclusion

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Esther H. Chong, Registration No. 40,953 at the telephone number of the undersigned below to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Director is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge any fees required during the pendency of the above-identified application or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448.

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Respectfully submitted,

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